

The Newport Mercury.

SATURDAY MORNING, DEC. 14, 1861.

SOME may have thought it strange, that any one should have doubted, in the commencement of the war, whether the grand object to be secured by its prosecution was sufficiently well understood to lead to any practical result.—But, after so many months of actual hostilities and the necessary sacrifice of so much blood and treasure, it has been discovered at length that the North are not entirely united as to the chief end of the war, and as to the proper means of bringing it to a happy conclusion.—The moderate party are generally satisfied that the Administration will sustain their views.—But the extreme party express great dissatisfaction with the President's policy; and if not in opposition, they are endeavoring to produce a radical change in his measures. Under these circumstances, great anxiety will naturally be felt by both parties, in respect to the action of Congress upon measures, now under consideration in that body, in relation to the confiscation of property and to the emancipation of persons held as servants for life. As *confiscation* does not necessarily involve *emancipation*, the trouble is, to decide what shall be done with the persons who shall be confiscated. They might be sold to loyal masters, if Congress could pass a law to that effect. They might be turned loose upon the States on an equal foot, as citizens with the white population, if good faith could sanction such a proceeding under the constitution, and the President should not interpose his veto to the bill; as the public are assured he would. But that executive act will not be necessary, if the administration have an undoubted majority in each branch of the national legislature, as most probably will be the case upon such a question. The integrity of the Union being the great end of federal loyalty, any measure that would unavoidably alienate the States of Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland, would have a disloyal effect, even if not prompted by a disloyal motive. The agonized voice of the Louisville Journal, which has suffered so much for its loyalty, may be considered as good evidence of the impolicy of extreme measures for preserving the Union, not only in Kentucky, but also in the other States situated like Kentucky. That Journal, not understanding perhaps the message, and fearing no doubt the probable effect of the Legislature upon the Executive Department, calls in the most earnest tones of persuasion for a universal petition of the masses in the North to ensure moderate counsels in the Administra-

tion. On our first page to-day will be found copies of the official papers connected with the expedition of Brig. Gen. T. W. SHERMAN. The subjoined communication from Lieut. GEORGE MERRILL, Adj't-Camp to the General, ex plain what are re-published in the *Mercy*.

HILTON HEAD, S. C.
Nov. 26th, 1861.

To the Editors of the *Newport Mercury*:

GENTLE—A copy of your paper of the 16th inst. has been placed in the hands of the Commanding General; and his attention called to the documents therein contained purporting to be "the official report of Gen. SHERMAN," and "the proclamation issued by Gen'l SHERMAN to the people of South Carolina."

As these productions have, (though not through his agency or with his consent,) been given to the press, and by them issued to the public, at the North as well as at the South, in a very much mutilated and garbled form, justice to their author requires that, in one journal at least, they should be published as they were penned.

I am accordingly directed, by Gen'l SHERMAN forward to you authentic copies of the "proclamation" and "report," (which are herewith enclosed,) hoping that you will lay the same, at your earliest convenience, before the people of his native State, that he may be judged by them and others for the language he has used, not for what friends or enemies have put into his mouth.

With much respect,
Your ch'r servt,
GEORGE MERRILL.
Adj't-Camp.

That Gen. SHERMAN should desire correct copies of his official papers to be published, instead of those garbled productions of the New York press, is very natural, not that he cares for the fanatical yelpings of a few editors in New York, but that his fellow-citizens may know what his position is in this contest.

Every prominent General is receiving at this time a respite from the noisy demagogues of the country. THAD STEVENS is pitching into Gen. McCLELLAN, and the New York Post repeats it; OWEN LOVEJOY beats Gen. HALLOCK, and the New York Tribune chuckles at it, because he does not follow out the plans of Gen. FREMONT. Gen. BUELL is blamed for not advancing to Cumberland Gap, and Gen. SHERMAN, because he did not march with his army inland and capture Charleston, Columbus, and Savannah, set all the negroes picking cotton and slaves to work the soil, and place the prisoners on British soil as soon as possible. That they should go there might not be a damage, much less an injury, if not wanted here for other purposes.

THE Providence Press of Thursday, publishes a very full account of the bombardment of pensacola from which it is evident that our forces have effected much and the rebels nothing.

It appears that on the morning of November 2d, at about 10 o'clock Fort Pickens sent a shot at the rebel steamer *Tiger* lying at the Naval Yard, which disabled her. The rebel Forts immediately answered and the action began.

The frigates Niagara and Rock Island came up within range of Fort McRae and during the whole day the bombardment was kept up, the result of which was that Fort McRae was silenced with three holes in it, two made by the Niagara, and one large enough for a horse and cart to enter, made by Fort Pickens. Warrenton was in flames and the Navy Yard nearly destroyed. The bombardment was renewed the following day, but no particular damage done. Our loss was one killed in Fort Pickens and eight wounded, one fatally. On the Richmond one killed and seven wounded. No one was even scratched on board the Niagara. Fort Pickens was not damaged in the least and had only one gun dismounted. The Niagara had two holes made in her sides, but received no serious damage, and the Rock Island had one shot through her bulwarks and a shell burst six feet below the water line, which caused her to leak badly that she had to be sent to Key West for repairs. The writer says:

I question whether Col. Brown will attempt to do much more. He has effected his purpose—that of destroying the winter quarters of the rebels and although they succeeded in putting out the fire in the Navy Yard, he has shown them that it will be a very unsafe operation to commence work there again, as he can and will set fire to it again, if they make the attempt.

On Tuesday, the Senate resolution for ap-

pointing a joint committee to inquire into the manner in which the present war is conducted, was concurred in by the House. And what ever may be the authority of this committee or the direction of their inquiries under their authority, they are to have the usual power of sending for persons and papers. Undoubtedly many cases of malversation have occurred, and will continue to occur, requiring the impartial investigation of such committees of the two Houses. And in consequence of dissatisfaction on the part of those immediately affected, and of the complaints which have been made public by the newspaper press, it is to the individual sufferers and to the public at large, as well as to those who have been unjustly implicated by unofficial reports, that justice should be done to all concerned in the prosecution of the war, by the investigation of a duly authorized committee. And if it should be ascertained that no cases of the kind have yet occurred, the appointment of a committee to perform such a duty, is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. If the constitutional authority of the government is to be maintained, and with it the American Union.

The laws we the bonds of the Union. To dissolve the laws is to dissolve the Union.

And this is true, whether their authority be openly renounced or secretly undermined. If Congress had always watched the tendency of license, in every station whether public or private, as closely as they might have done with a single eye to the general welfare of the nation, the most serious evils now experienced might have been avoided. But instead of that, various cross and selfish views have gradually become more and more predominant in our public councils, till the patriotic spirit which founded and aggrandized the republic in the highest degree of renown, no longer directed our public affairs. Some will attribute this result to the effect of too great prosperity. And undoubtedly this alone would be sufficient in the right direction, if the constitutional authority of the government is to be maintained, and with it the American Union.

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